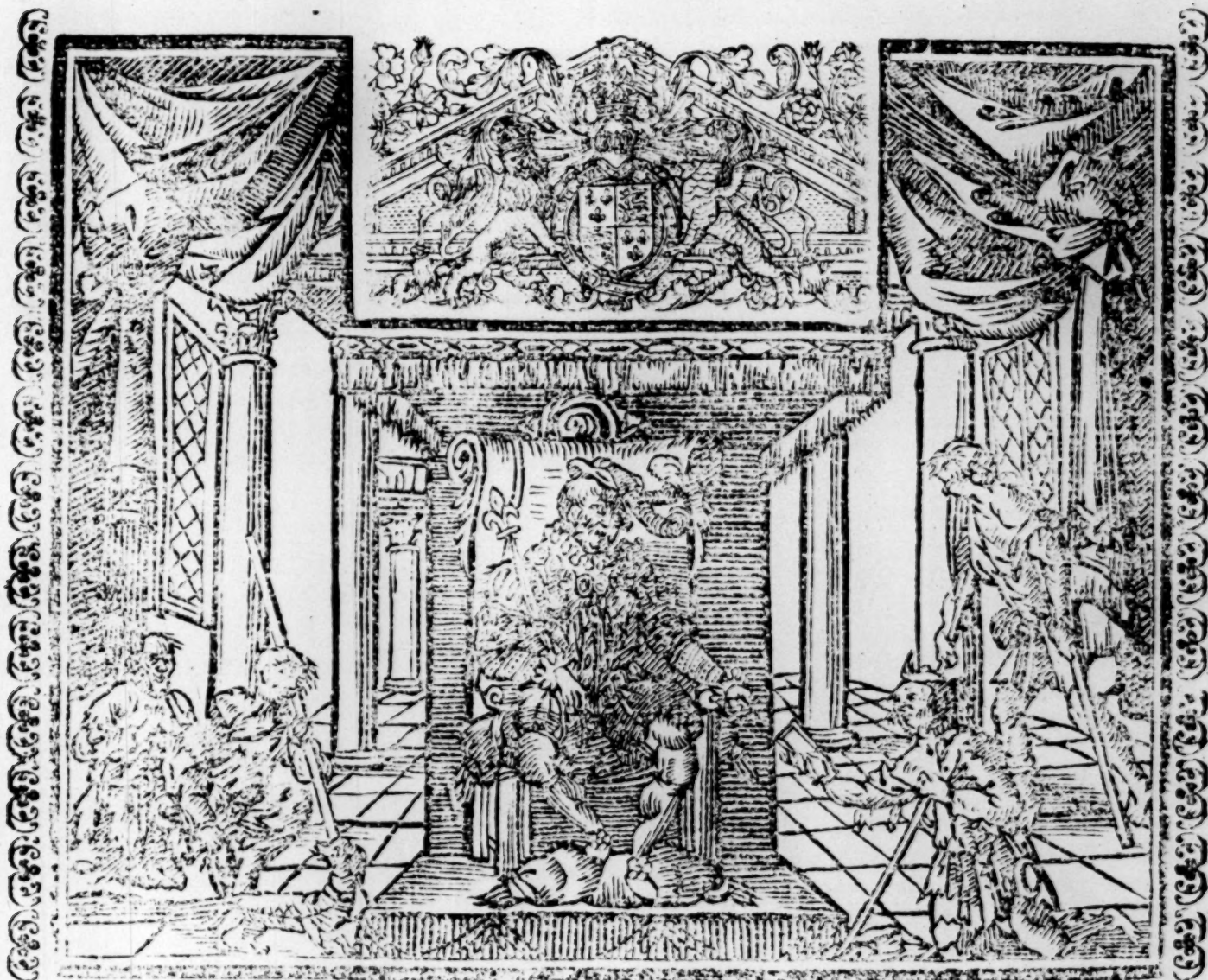


Beggars PETITION

Against P O P E R Y:

Wherein they lamentably complain to King *Henry* the VIII. of the CLERGY



1. Of their abominable Covetousness and Oppression, in several Particulars, from § 3. to § 13.
 2. Of their Insatiable Litchery, being *Devils at women*: and how they apply themselves by all Sights they may, to have to do with every Mans wife, Daughter, and Maid, (*as well Ladies as meaner Persons, when they come in their way*) from § 13 to 17.
 3. They brought in Theft with them, and nourished it under them; § 17.
 4. That they baffled all Laws, that none could take hold of them, tho they ravished men's Wives and Daughters, (*which that curst Crew would be at again, tho not in that seeming holy Method, but now in an open, odious debauched Way, like infernal Incubusses, who now have naturalized Succubus's for their turn, &c.*) For the Law was too weak to hold them; they making such as begin with them quickly to cease prosecuting them, § 18.
 5. An Example hereof, see in the Bp. of London. § 19.
 6. Tho the Statute of *Mortmain* was made to prevent giving them any more, yet still they got more than any Duke, § 20, & 21.
 7. Their yearly Exactions came by cursed pretensions of praying peoples Souls out of Purgatory, &c. § 22.
 8. This Doctrine of Purgatory was alwaies opposed by godly learned men, § 23, & 24.
 9. Their Hellish Policy in not suffering the New Testament to be translated in the Mother-tongue, lest their Hypocrisy and Cheating should be discovered § 25, 26.
 10. The Impudence of Dr. Allen and Dr. *Horsey*, fined to the King, but afterwards therefore amply rewarded by the Clergy, § 27.
 11. The Reason of this was because the Chancellor was one of them, viz. a Clergy man, § 28.
 12. The Cheat of giving Lands or Money to the Church for the Poor or Masses, § 30.
 13. They Petition to turn these Blood-suckers out to labor, and get them wives of their own, § 31.
 14. The Benefits and Advantages of so doing, &c. § 31, 32.
- These Arguments and the like, prevailed with this King to cast off the Popes Authority, and why any should be so foolishly wicked, as to think to return us to it, I know not, most certainly they will find themselves deceived with a vengeance, &c.*

Presented to King *Henry* VIII. in the 29 Year of his Reign, *An. Dom.* 1538. 8 years before his Death. And Now Printed *verbatim* from a very old Copy, only mending the Authography, for the ease of the Reader, making the several Sections, and Collecting the foregoing Contents. *With perusing by both Popish and Protestant, for the one to see how his Forefathers and he have been and are gul'd; and the other to see how he is like to be eternally abused, if he either through Fear of Death, or otherways embrace Popery, 1682.*

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NOT

To the KING our Sovereign Lord.

MOST lamentably complaineth, their Woful Misery unto your Highness, your poor daily Bede-men, the wretched, hideous Monsters (on whom scarcely for horror any Eye dare look) the foul unhappy sort of Lepers, and other sore People, Needy, Impotent, Blind, Lame, and Sick, that live only by **A L M E S**: How that their Number is daily so sore encreased, That all the Almes of all the well-disposed People of this your Realm, is not half enough for to sustain them: but that for very constraint they dy for Hunger.

2. And this most pestilent Mischief is come upon your said poor Bede-men, by the Reason that there is (in the times of your noble Predecessors passed) craftily Crept into this your Realm, another Sort (not of Impotent but) of strong puissant and Counterfeit-holy and idle Beggars and Vagabonds, which since the time of their first Entry by all the Craft and Wiliness of Satan, are now encreased under your sight, not only into a great Number, but also into a Kingdom.

3. These are not the Herds (or Sheep) but the ravenous Wolves, going in Herds-clothing, devouring the Flock; the Bishops, Abbots, Fryours, Deacons, Arch-deacons, Suffragans, Priests, Monks, Cannons, Fryers, Pardoners and Somners: And who is able to number this idle, ravenous Sort, which (setting all labour aside) have begged so importunately that they have gotten into their hands more than the Third Part of all your Realm: The Goodliest Lordships, Mannors, Lands and Territories are theirs. Besides this, They have the Tenth part of all the Corn, Meadow, Pasture, Grass, Wooll, Colts, Calves, Lambs, Pigs, Geese and Chickens. Over and besides the Tenth part of every Servant's Wages, the Tenth Part of the Wooll, Milk, Hony, Wax, Cheese and Butter. Yea, and they look so narrowly upon their Profits, That the poor Wives must be countable to them of every Tenth Egg, or else she getteth not her Rights at Easter, shall be taken as an Heretick; Hereto have they their four Offering dayes.

4. What Money pull they in by Probates of Testaments, privy Tithes, and by mens Offerings to their Pilgrimages, and at their first Masses. Every man and Child that is buryed must pay somewhat for Masses and Dirges to be sung for him, or else they will accuse the Dead's Friends and Executors of Heresy. What Money get they by Mortuaries, by hearing of Confessions (and yet they will keep thereof no Counsel) by hallowing of Churches, Altars, Superalters, Chappels and Bells; by Cursing of Men, and absolving them again for Money.

5. What multitude of Mony gather the Pardoners in a year? how much Mony get the Somners (i. Parators) by Extorsion in a year? by assciting the People to the Commissaries Court, and afterwards releasing the Appearance for Mony. Finally, the infinite number of Beggars Fryers, what get they in a year?

6. Here, if it please your Grac to mark, ye shall see a thing far out of joint; There are within your Realm of *England* fifty two Thousand Parish-Churches: And this standing, That there be but Ten Houlholdes in every Parish, yet are there 500 000, and 20 000 Houlholds: and of every of these Houlholds hath every of the Five Orders of Fryers a penny a Quarter for every order, that is, for all the Five Orders 5 d. a quarter for every House. That is, for all the five Orders 20 pence a year of every house. Summa 500 000 and 20 000 quarters of Angells: that is CCLX Thousand half-angels; summa CXXX Thousand Angells: Summa totalis XLIII thousand pounds, and CCCXXXIII^l. 6 s. and 8 d. sterling: Whereof, not 400 years passed they had not one peny. Oh

grievous and painful Exactions thus yearly to be paid, from the which the People of your noble Predecessors the King of the Ancient Britains ever stood free.

7. And this will they have, or else they will procure him that will not give it them to be taken as an Heretick. What Tyrant ever oppressed the People like this cruel and Vengeable Generation? What Subjects shall be able to help their Prince, that be after this fashion yearly polled? What good Christian People can be able to succour us poor Lepers, Blind, sore and Lame, that be thus yearly oppressed? Is it any Marvel that your People so complain of Poverty? Is it any Marvel that the Taxes, Fifteens, and Subsidies that your Grace, most tenderly of great Compassion, hath taken among your People to defend them from the Threatned Ruin of their Common Wealth, have been so slothfully, yea painfully levied? Seeing that almost the uttermost Penny that might have been levied hath bin gathered before, verily by this ravenous cruel and insatiable Generation.

8. The *Danes* neither the *Saxons*, in the time of the Ancient *Britains*, should never have been able to have brought their Armies, from so far, hither unto your Land, to have conquered it, if they had had at that time such a sort of idle Gluttons, to find at home. The Noble King *Arthur* had never been able to have carried his Army to the Foot of the Mountains, to resist the coming down of *Lucius* the Emperour, if such yearly exactions had bin taken of his People. The *Greeks* had never been able to have so long continued at the Siege of *Troy*, if they had had at home such an idle sort of Cormorants to sine. The ancient *Romans* had never been able to have put all the whole World under their Obeysance, if their People had bin thus oppressed.

9. The *Turk*, now in your time, should never be able to get so much Ground of Christendom, if he had in his Empire such a sort of Locusts to devour his Substance. Lay then these Summs to the foresaid third part of the Possessions of the Realm, that ye may see whether it draw nigh unto the half of the whole Substance of the Realm, or not: So shall you find that it draweth far above.

10. Now let us then compare the Number of this unkind, idle Sort unto the Number of the lay People, and we shall see whether it be indifferently shited or not that they should have half? Compare them to be number of Men, so are they not the Hundredth Person. Compare them to men, women and Children, then are they not the CCCC person in number. One part therefore in four hundred parts divided were too much for them, except they did labour. What an unequal burthen is it, That they have half with the Multitudes and are not the CCCC person of their number? What Tongue is able to tell, That ever there was any Common wealth so sore oppressed since the World began?

11. And what do all these greedy sort of sturdy, idle, holy Thieves with these yearly Exactions that they take of the People? Truly nothing, but exempt themselves from the Obedience and Dignity, from your Grace unto them: Nothing but that your Subjects should fall into Disobedience and Rebellion against your Grace, and be under them? As they did unto the Noble Predecessor King *John*, which forbycause that he would have punished certain Traytors that had conspired with the French King to have deposed him from his Crown and Dignity (among the which a Clark called *Stephen*, whom, afterwards, against the King's Will, the Pope made Bishop of *Canterbury* was one), entered into his Land. For the which Matter your most noble Realm wrongfully (alas for shame!) hath stood Tributary, not to any kind temporal Prince, but unto a Cruel Devillish Blood-supper, drunken in the Blood of the Saints and Martyrs of Christ ever since. Here were a holy sort of Prelates, that thus cruelly could punish such a righteous King, all his Realm and succession for doing right.

12. Here were a Charitable sort of Holy men that could thus enterdye an holy Realm, and pluck away the Obedience of the People from their Natural Liege Lord and King for his Righteousness! Here were a blessed sort, not of meek Herds, but of Blood-suppers, that could set the French King upon such a Righteous Prince to cause

cause him to lose his Crown and Dignity to make effusion of the Blood of his People, unless this good and blessed King of great Compassion, more fearing and lamenting the shedding of the Blood of his People, than the loss of his Crown and Dignity, against all Right and Conscience, had submitted himself unto them: O case most horrible, that ever so noble a Kings Realm and Succession should thus be made to stoop to such a sort of Blood-suppers! Where was his Sword, Power, Crown and Dignity become, whereby he might have done Justice in this Manner? Where was their Obedience become, that should have bin subject under his high Power, in this Matter? Yea, where was the Obedience of all his Subjects become that for Maintenance of the Common wealth, should have holpen him manfully to have resisted these Blood-suppers to the shedding of their Blood? Was not altogether by their Policy translated from this Good King unto them?

13. Yea, and what do they more? Truly, nothing but apply themselves by all the sleights they may, to have to do with every Mans Wife, every Mans Daughter, and every Mans maid; That CUCKOLDRY should reign over all among your Subjects; that no man should know his own Child, that Their Bastards might inherit the Possessions of every man, to put the right begotten Children clear beside their Inheritance, in subversion of all Estates and Godly order. These be they that by their abstaining from Marriage do let the Generation of the People, whereby all the Realm, at length, if it should be continued, shall be made desert and inhabitable. *They mean, that for this Sin of Whoredom God's Vengeance would fall on the Land.*

14. These be they that have made an Hundred thousand idle Whores in your Realm, which would have gotten their living honestly in the sweat of their faces, had not their superfluous Riches elected them to unclean Lust and Idleness. These be they that corrupt the whole Generation of Mankind in your Realm: that catch the POX of one Woman, and bare it to another: Yea, some one of them will boast among his fellows, that he hath medled with an Hundred Women. These be they that when they have once drawn mens Wives to such Incontinency, spend away their Husbands Goods, make the Women to run away from their Husbands, yea, run away themselves both with Wife and Goods, bring both Man, Wife and Children to Idleness, Theft and Beggery.

15. Yea, who is able to number the great and broad bottomless Ocean Sea-full of Evils that this mischievous and sinful Generation may lawfully bring upon us unpunished. Where is your Sword, Power, Crown and Dignity become, that should punish (by Punishment of Death, even as other men be punished) the Felons, Rapes, Murders and Treasons committed by this sinful Generation? Where is their Obedience become that should be under your high power in this Matter? Is not altogether translated and exempted from your grace unto them? Yes truly. What an infinite number of People might have bin increased to have peopled the Realm, if these sort of Folk had bin married like other men? What breach of Matrimony is there brought in by them? Such truly, as was never since the World began among the whole multitude of the Heathen.

16. Who is she that will set her hands to work to get 3^l. a day, and may have at least 20^l. a day to sleep an hour with a Fryer, a Monk or a Priest? What is He that would labor for a great a Day, and may have at least 12^l. a day to be Bawd to a Priest a Monk or a Fryer? What a sort are there of them that marry Priests, sovereign Ladies, but to cloak the Priests Incontinency, and that they may have a living of the Priests themselves for their Labour? How many Thousands doth such Lubricyte bring to Beggery, Theft, and Idleness, which should have kept their good Name, and have set themselves to work, had not bin this excess Treasure of the Spirituality? What honest man dare take any man or woman in his Service that hath bin at such a School with a spiritual man?

17. Oh the grievous shipwrack of the Common wealth, which, in ancient time, before the coming in of these ravenous Wolves, was so prosperous that then there were but few Thieves, yea Theft was at that time so rare, That Cesar was not compelled to make Penalty of Death upon Felony, as your Grace may well perceive in his Institutes. There was also at that time but few poor People, and yet they did

not beg. but there was given them enough unasked. For there was at that time none of these Ravenous VVolves to ask it from them, as it appeareth in the Acts of the Apostles. Is it any Marvel though there be now so many Beggars, Thieves and idle People? No truly.

18. VVhat Remedy make Laws against them? I am in doubt whether ye be able: Are they not stronger in your own Parliament House than your self? VVhat a number of Bishops, Abbotes and Priors are Lords of your Parliament? Are not all the learned Men in your Realm, in fee with them, to speak in your Parliament house against your Crown, Dignity and Common VVealth of your Realm, a few of your own Learned Council only excepted? VVhat Law can be made against them, that may be available? VVho is he (though he be grieved never so sore) for the Murder of his Ancestor, Ravishment of his VVife, of his Daughter; Robbery, Trespass, Maim, Debt, or any other Offence, dare lay it to their Charge by any way of Action; and if he do, then is he, by and by, by their wiliness, accused of Heresy Yea, they will so handle him, ere he pass, that except he will bare a faggot for their Pleasure, he shall be Excommunicated, and then be all his Actions dashed! So captive are your Laws unto them, That no man that they list to Excommunicate, may be admitted to sue any action in any of your Courts. If any man in your Sessions dare be so hardy to indyte a Priest of any such Crime, he hath, ere the year goeth out, such a Yoke of Heresy laid in his neck, that it make him wish, that he had not done it.

19. Your Grace may see what a VVork there is in LONDON, how the Bishop rageth for endicting of certain Curates of Extortion and Incontinency, the last year in the VVarmol Quest. Had not *Richard Hunne* commenced Action of Præmunire against a Priest, he had been yet alive and no Heretick at all, but an Honest man.

20. Did not divers of your Noble Progenitors, seeing their Crown and Dignity run into Ruin, and to be thus craftily translated into the hands of this mischievous Generation, make divers Statutes for the reformation thereof? among which the Statute of Mortmain was one: to the intent that, after that time, they should have no more given unto them. But what availed it? Have they not gotten into their hands more Lands since than any Duke in *England*, the Statute notwithstanding? Yea, have they not for all that translated into their hands from your Grace half your Kingdom throughly? The whole name, as reason is for the Anciency of your Kingdom, which was before theirs, and out of the which theirs is grown, only abiding with your Grace, and of one Kindom made twain: the Spiritual Kingdom (as they call it) for they will be named first; and your Temporal Kingdom: And which of these two Kingdomes, suppose ye, is like to over-grow the other, yea, to put the other out of Memory? truly, the Kingdom of the Blood-suppers, for to them is given daily out of your Kingdom. And, that that is once given them cometh never from them again: Such Laws have they, that none of them may neither give nor sell nothing.

21. VVhat Law can be made so strong against them, that they, either with Money or else with other Policy, will not break and set at nought? VVhat Kingdom can endure that ever giveth thus from him, and receiveth nothing again? O how all the Substance of your Realm, forthwith your Sword, Power, Crown, Dignity and Obedience of your People runneth headlong into the insatiable VVhirl pool of these greedy Goulafres to be swallowed and devoured.

22. Neither have they any other Colour to gather these yearly Exactions into their hands, but that they say, They pray for us to G O D to deliver our Souls out of the Pains of PURGATORY, without whose Prayer, they say, or at least, without the POPES Pardon, we could never be delivered thence: which, if it be true, then is it good Reason we give them all these things, ALL, were it a hundred times as much.

23. But there be many men of great Literature and Judgment, for the Love they have unto the Truth and unto the Common-wealth, have not feared to put themselves into the greatest Infamy that may be, in abjection of all the world

world. Yea, in Peril of Death, to declare their Opinion in this Matter: VVhich is, That there is no Purgatory, but that it is a thing invented by the Covetousness of the Spirituality, only to translate all Kingdoms from all other Princes unto them. and there is not one word spoken of it in holy Scripture. They say also, That, if there were a Purgatory; and also if that the Pope with his Pardons for Money may deliver one Soul thus, he may deliver him as well without Money; if he may deliver one, he may deliver a Thousand; if he may deliver a Thousand, he may deliver them all, and also destroy Purgatory. And then is he a cruel TYRANT without all Charity, if he keep them there in Prison and in Pain till men will give him Money.

24. Likewise say they of all the whole sort of the Spirituality, That if they will not pray for no man, but for them that give them Money, they are Tyrants, and lack Charity, and suffer those Souls to be punished and pained uncharitably for lack of their Prayers. These sort of Folk they call Hereticks, these they burn, these they rage against, put to open shame and make them bare Fagots. But whether they be Hereticks or no, well I wot, That this Purgatory, and the Popes Pardons is all the Cause of Translation of your Kingdom so fast into their hands: wherefore it is manifest, it cannot be of Christ; for he gave more to the Temporal Kingdom; he himself paid Tribute to *Cesar*, he took nothing from him, but taught that the High Powers should be alwaies obeyed; yea, himself (although he were most free Lord of all, and innocent) was obedient unto the high Powers, unto Death.

25. This is the great Scab, why they will not let the New Testament go abroad in your Mother-Tongue, least men should espy that their cloaked hypocrisy do translate thus fast your Kingdom into their hands; that they are not obedient unto your high Power, that they are cruel, unclean, unmerciful, and hypocrites, that they seek not the Honour of Christ but their own, that remission of Sins are not given by the Popes pardon, but by Christ, for the sure Faith and Trust we have in him. Here may your Grace well perceive, that except ye suffer their Hypocrisy, to be disclosed, all is like to run into their Hands, and as long as it is covered, so long shall it seem to every man to be a great Impiety not to give them. For this I am sure, your Grace thinketh (as the Truth is) I am as good a man as my Father, why may I not give them as much as my Father did? And of this mind I am sure are all the Lords, Knights, Squires, Gentlemen and Yeomen in *England*: Yea, and until it be disclosed, all your People will think that your Statute of Mortmain was never made with no good Conscience, seeing that it taketh away the Liberty of your People, in that they may not as lawfully buy their Souls out of Purgatory, by giving to the Spirituality, as their Predecessor did in times passed.

26. VVherefore, If you will eschew the Ruine of your Crown and Dignity, let their Hypocrisy be uttered, and that shall be more speedful in this matter, than all the Laws that may be made be they never so strong. For, to make a Law for to punish any offender, except it were more for to give other men an Ensamble to beware to commit such like offence, what should it avail? Did not Dr. *Allen* most presumptuously, now in your time, against all his Allegiance, all that ever he could to pull from you the Knowledg of such a leas as long unto your High Courts, unto another Court, in Derogation of your Crown and Dignity:

27. Did not also Dr. *Horsey* and his Complices most heynously, as all the VVorld knoweth, murder in Prison that honest Merchant *Richard Hunne*? For that he sued your VVrit of Premunire against a Priest that wronfully held him in Plea in a spiritual Court for a matter whereof the Knowledg belongeth unto your high Courts: and what punishment was there don that any man might take Example of, to beware of like offence? truly none but that the one paid five hundred pounds (as it is said, to the Building of your Star-Chamber) and when that payment was once passed; the Captains of his Kingdom (because he fought so manfully against your Crown and Dignity) have heaped to him Benefice upon Benefice, so that he is rewarded ten times as much. The other, as its said, paid 600 l. for him and his Complices,

which for because that he had likewise fought so manfully against your *Crown and Dignity* was immediately (as he had obtained your most gracious *Pardon*) promoted by the Captains of his Kingdom with Benefice upon Benefice to the value of four times as much. VVho can take example of this punishment to beware of such like offence? VVho is he of their Kingdom that will not rather take courage to commit like offence, seeing the promotions that fell to these men for their so offending? so weak and blunt is your sword to strike at one of the Offenders of this crooked and perverse Generation.

28. And this is by the Reason that the Chief Instrument of your Law, yea the Chief of your Council, and he which hath your Sword in his hand, to whom also all other Instruments are obedient, is always a spiritual man, which hath ever such an inordinate love unto his own Kingdom, that he will maintain that, though all the Temporal Kingdoms and Commonwealth of the world should utterly therefore be undone.

29. Here leave we out the greatest Matter of all, lest we, declaring such an horrible Carrion of evil against the Ministers of Iniquity, should seem to declare the one only fault, or rather the ignorance of our best beloved Minister of righteousness, which is to be hid till he may be learned by these small enormities that we have spoken of, to know it plainly himself. But what Remedy to relieve us your poor, sick, lame and sore Bedemen? To make many Hospitals for the Reliefe of the poor People? Nay truly, The more the worse; for ever the fat of the whole Foundation liangeth on the Priests Beards.

30. Divers of your Noble Predecessors, Kings of this Realm have given Lands to Monasteries, to give a certain sum of Money yearly to the poor People, whereas for the ancient of the time they give never one peny. They have likewise given to them to have certain Masses said daily for them (*in the Dead*), whereof they never said one: If the Abbot of *Westminster* should sing every day as many Masses for his Counters as he is bound to do by his Foundation, a Thousand Monks were too few.

31. VVherefore, if your Grace will build a sure Hospital, that never shall fail to relieve us your poor Bedemen, so take from them all those things: Set there sturdy Lobbies abroad in the VVorld to get them VVives of their own, to get their living with their Labour, in the sweat of their Faces, according to the Commandment of God, *Gen 3*: to give other idle people, by their Example occasion to go to Labour: Tye these holy, idle Thieves to the Carts to be whipped naked about every Market Town till they will fall to labour, that they may by their Importunate begging take not away the Alms that the good Christian People would give unto us sore, impotent, miserable people your Bedemen. Then shall aswell the number of our foresaid monstrous sort, as Bauds, Whores, Thieves, and idle People decrease: Then shall these great, yearly Exactions cease: Then shall not your Sword, Power, Crown, Dignity & Obedience of your People be translated from you: Then shall you have full Obedience of your People: Then shall the idle People be set to work.

32. Lastly Then shall Matrimony be much better kept: Then shall the Generation of your People be increased: Then shall your Commons increase in Riches: N.B. Then shall the Gospel be preached: Then shall none beg our Alms from us: Then shall we have enough, and more than shall suffice us, which shall be the best Hospital that ever was founded for us. Then shall we daily pray to GOD for your most noble Estate long to endure.

DOMINE, SALVUM FAC REGEM.

Reader, Thus thou hast seen what a filthy Religion the Popish Religion is, countenancing all kind of Sin, that thereby their Pardons may pass off (so poor deluded Persons, tho otherwise they are never so great in the World.) In short, its a Religion fit to be countenanced only by the worst of Men: and since it has had hopes of prevailing, Profaness and the worst kind of Wickedness hath run through this Kingdom like a mighty Torrent! Wherefore, let us all true Protestants joyn, and, as one man, cry mightily to God, That he would bring some eminent Destruction upon all, both Contrivers and Countenancers, of those that would Subvert the Protestant Religion, whether they be publick or private Persons; And let all the People say, A M E N.

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